

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 03967 171221Z
ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T AMMAN 3967

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, PBOR, JO, US, XF
SUBJECT: WATER RIGHTS

REF: A) AMMAN 3961 B) STATE 160126

1. SUBSEQUENT TO CONVERSATION REFTEL, I WAS TELEPHONED
BY CROWN PRINCE HASSAN IN EARLY EVENING HOURS OF
JULY 16. HASSAN ASKED TO SEE ME IMMEDIATELY ABOUT
PAPER WE HAD GIVEN OMAR ABDULLAH (REFTEL A) THAT SAME DAY.

2. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION, IT APPEARED THAT HASSAN
WAS CONCERNED ABOUT SEVERAL POINTS.

A) HE WANTED US TO LINE OUT "ISRAEL" THROUGHOUT
THE DOCUMENT PREFERRING TWO PARALLEL PIECES OF PAPER.
WHEN I EXPLAINED THAT THIS WAS A "U.S. WORKING PAPER"
AND THAT ALL WE WERE ASKING FOR WAS ORAL STATEMENT
THAT ITS SUBSTANCE ACCORDED WITH GOJ UNDERSTANDING
OF SITUATION, BACKED UP BY A LETTER ACKNOWLEDGING
RECEIPT AT TIME BOTH SIDES SAID SUBSTANCE WAS
ALRIGHT. HASSAN SAID HE DID NOT WANT TO GIVE THIS
PAPER TO CABINET. I SAID THAT WAS AN INTERNAL GOJ
MATTER, AS LONG AS GOJ TOLD US SUBSTANCE WAS
CORRECT. HE SAID THAT THEY WOULD BRIEF THE CABINET,

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NOT LEAVE A PAPER. WITH PRESENT STANCE OF BEGIN
GOVERNMENT ISSUE OF COOPERATION ON MAQARIN TOOK ON A NEW
SENSITIVITY HERE.

B) HE FELT THAT HIS RECOLLECTION OF WEST BANK
LANGUAGE COMMITTED JORDAN TO PROVIDE WATER FOR WEST
BANK. HE WAS PERSONALLY READY TO DO THIS, BUT ISRAEL
SHOULD FIRST AGREE TO DO SO. I TOLD HIM THAT LANGUAGE WAS

CAREFULLY DRAWN AND THAT IT WAS MY VIEW THAT EACH SIDE DID NO MORE THAN RECOGNIZE THAT THE WEST BANK HAD WATER RIGHTS IN THE JORDAN RIVER SYSTEM. I THOUGHT THIS ALSO BROUGHT THE ISRAELIS ALONG. HE SAID HE AGREED WITH MY POINT AND I TOLD HIM I WOULD AGAIN REVIEW THE TEXT ON THIS POINT (NEITHER HE NOR I HAD A COPY). I HAVE DONE SO AND WILL TELL HIM AGAIN THAT I BELIEVE MY VIEW IS THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION.

C) FINALLY, HASSAN WAS CONCERNED THAT JORDAN WAS AGREEING WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE WAS. I SAID THAT HERE TWO POINTS WERE IMPORTANT: (1) WHILE FINAL MEETINGS IN ISRAEL LAST MONTH WERE HELD IN KNOWLEDGE THAT BEGIN GOVERNMENT WAS BEING FORMED, WE NOT SURE OF EXACTLY WHAT ITS ATTITUDE WOULD BE. PAPER WOULD RESOLVE THAT POINT ONCE AND FOR ALL; AND (2) SINCE PRESS REPORTED BEGIN GOVERNMENT HAD SOME IDEAS ABOUT WATER ISSUES TO PRESENT TO PRESIDENT CARTER, WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA IF JORDAN'S ESSENTIALLY FORTHCOMING POSITION WERE KNOWN TO U.S. GOVERNMENT IN ADVANCE OF THAT MEETING. HASSAN APPEARED ALSO TO AGREE WITH THESE POINTS.

3. WHEN I LEFT HIM HASSAN SAID THAT PAPER WAS FINE WITH JORDAN. HOWEVER AT MY URGING HE AGREED TO SEE ME AGAIN ON JULY 18 IN THE MORNING AFTER HE DISCUSSES
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PAPER AGAIN WITH HIS CLOSE ADVISORS OMAR ABDULLAH AND HANAH ODEH.

4. COMMENT: I DO NOT BELIEVE WE ARE HEADED FOR SERIOUS TROUBLE WITH HASSAN (HE ENDED UP AGREEING PAPER IS ALRIGHT). I HAVE KEPT KING BRIEFED AND HASSAN AGREED WHEN NEXT I SEE KING I WILL BRING HIM UP TO DATE. I BELIEVE HASSAN'S NOSE WAS A LITTLE OUT OF JOINT THAT WE SAW OMAR ABDULLAH FIRST, ALTHOUGH WHEN I MADE CLEAR THAT I HAD STANDING REQUEST FOR AN APPOINTMENT TO GIVE HIM THE PAPER IT SEEMED TO EASE SITUATION.
PICKERING

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